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STATEMENT FROM HUNTINGTON SUPERVISOR FRANK P. PETRONE

This is the third time the Town of Huntington has appeared before various Islip Town boards on behalf of our residents to register our concerns about some of the specifics of the Heartland Square Plan. While we see some movement on the issues we first raised eight years ago, our main points remain unresolved and we hope that you, the Islip Town Board, will listen and take the proper response.

To recap our position: We recognize the right and authority of a Town to control its own zoning. And we also recognize and support efforts to bring in jobs, create new opportunities, revive communities and address changing housing demands. But we also believe that a proposal as transformational as Heartland demands planning that considers the effects not only within the borders of an individual town, but on the surrounding communities as well.

We also believe that for a project this massive, the infrastructure must be planned, developed and built for all phases of the proposal before construction of the first phase begins. Those who live in communities adjacent to the project, as well as those who would become the first residents of the new community, have a right to know and expect that the infrastructure has been put in place for the entire project in advance, and not planned and implemented on an as-you-go, reactive-rather-than-forward-looking basis.

Our chief and overriding concern has been the traffic effects of the project on the surrounding areas, most notably, from our perspective, Commack Road and the Sagtikos Parkway.

Seven years ago, the Town of Huntington advised the Suffolk County Planning Commission that the county and towns surrounding Heartland needed to reach a consensus on infrastructure improvements and begin those improvements BEFORE any decision is made by



the Town of Islip. On this point, we see only slight movement. We are to some extent heartened that the Commission, as part of its recommendations, called for additional traffic studies as the project proceeds, including midway through Phase One. But we do not think the Commission's recommendation that Islip merely study the feasibility of putting a traffic light at the Commack Road entrance to the Pilgrim State property at the commencement of the project is a sufficient response to major traffic problems general access to Heartland from Commack Road will produce.

We were encouraged that the Town Planning Board recognized the potential traffic effects by similarly calling for a new traffic study during the Phase One construction to evaluate the accuracy of the internal capture rate forecasts. But we do not believe the suggested response – modifying the density of future commercial development – would do anything to remedy the by-then current problem.

Overall, we also see no answer to the crucial issue of how Heartland will manage the enormous structural demands this massive project will have on the Sagtikos Parkway; the Long Island Expressway and its Service Roads; and Commack Road, Crooked Hill Road and other local roads.

Our residents, in particular, are concerned about the project's effect on Commack Road. As we noted two years ago, full access to Commack Road will severely impact residents for whom Commack Road provides access and egress, as well as affecting anyone who drives on Commack Road. We are asking you to take another look at the situation as you consider the zoning map for the project.

We ask you to look at how already, traffic on Commack Road, as well as Crooked Hill Road, has been severely affected by the commercial development of the shopping centers that include Costco, Target, Shop Rite, WalMart, Kohl's, Home Depot and Lowe's. Traffic has gotten worse since the new Chick Fil-A opened on Commack Road, not to mention the stores soon to open in the reconstructed shopping center adjacent to it. Traffic already backs up onto Commack and Crooked Hill Roads as motorists attempt to get to those spots. Heartland residents spilling out onto Commack Road to reach those destinations will make a bad situation even worse unless plans that address this issue are formalized and implemented now.

So, just as we did two years ago, and five years before that, we continue to ask: Are the public improvements that will be necessary to support this project going to be planned and implemented? When will the highway upgrades be built? Will they be built at all? Who will pay for these major upgrades? We do not believe the \$25 million required from the developer will be sufficient to cover the necessary work, especially since it remains unclear how much of that funding will be available in the first phase. What will happen when that funding runs out? When, if ever, will funding be appropriated to widen the Sagtikos Parkway?

And, most importantly, don't those living closest to the project, the people who will be most affected and disaffected by the creation of a new mega-community, have a right to have their legitimate concerns addressed?

We in Huntington recognize the need for all Long Island towns to reassess the suburban paradigm and adjust zoning and codes to meet changing demands. We have faced these questions ourselves as we continue to revitalize Huntington Station and as we adjust codes to create affordable housing in our downtowns, where market forces are setting the cost of apartments in new mixed-use buildings beyond the reach of those just entering the workforce.

We in Huntington applaud efforts to make Long Island as enticing a place for our children as it was for our parents, and understand that frequently, that calls for undertaking bold measures and thinking out of the box.

But we in Huntington also are keenly aware how important it is to assess and address the consequences of those actions, not to stall progress but to ensure that as we move along the path of progress, we do not push our current residents to the shoulder.

All we are asking is that as you consider the details of this proposed mega-rezoning, you give the residents of our town the same consideration that you give your own.